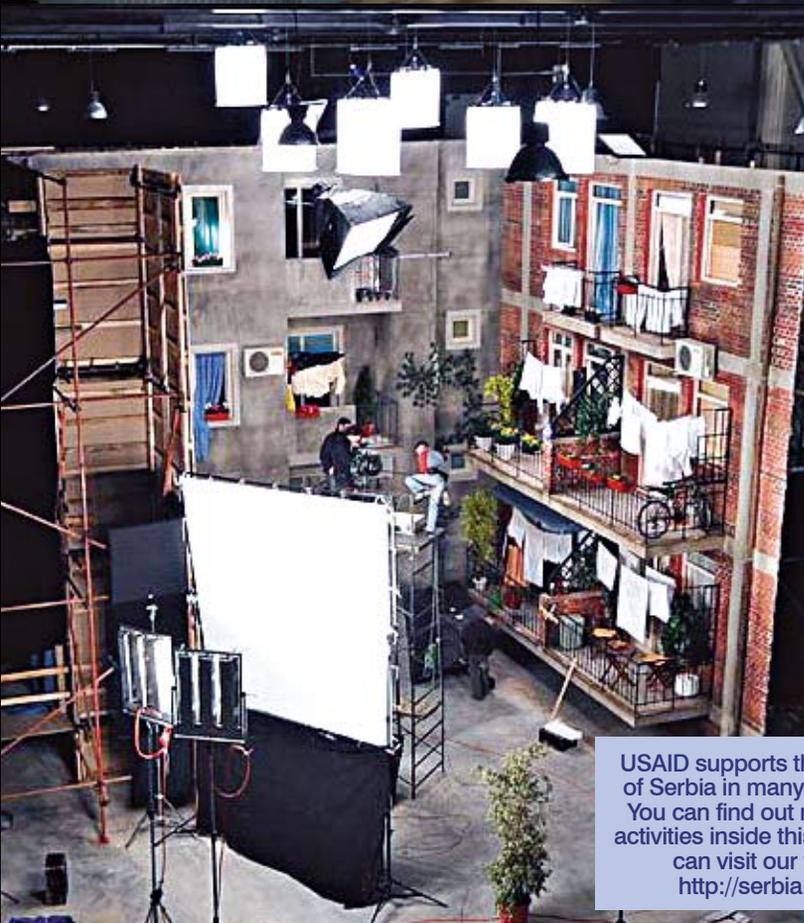




# USAID | SERBIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID supports the development of Serbia in many different areas. You can find out more about our activities inside this bulletin, or you can visit our website at: <http://serbia.usaid.gov>

# USAID helps Serbia Take Off as the “Next Investment Destination”

Vrsac, Leskovac, and Uzice soared higher than other municipalities to take the top three places in the USAID supported “Invest-in-Serbia” 2010 municipal competition. The final, trade fair-like event was the culmination of a two-month-long competition among 29 local governments participating in USAID’s Municipal Economic Growth program. Municipalities were evaluated in the following categories: most successful municipality in investment promotion; best economic data; best promotional material; best presentation at the Fair; and, best success story.

USAID, together with its partners in this initiative, pitched in to provide prizes worth nearly \$200,000 dollars for the winners of the competition, including a study tour to Auburn, Alabama and participation in the Munich Investment Fair.



## HONEY ON WHEELS

Siniša Milinković from Rušanj received a micro-finance loan from Opportunity Bank to repair his mobile beehiving bus which can be moved at any time to locations where conditions for the bees are optimal in order to increase honey production. USAID has been a partner of Opportunity since it started operations in Serbia in 2002.

# Junior Achievement is Serious Business for Forestry School Students

Creating mosaic mirror and picture frames from ceramic tiles is old-hat for teenagers from the construction and carpentry departments of Kraljevo’s Forestry School (Šumarska Škola), but building a business to sell their mosaic designs certainly presented them with a new and exciting challenge. Prior to February, the 20 classmates that founded the company Entazis would often spend free time talking of getting jobs or which university faculty to enter. That was before they joined Junior Achievement. Now that they have a broader vision for their potential in construction or carpentry – they can dream about owning a piece of Serbia’s future and contribute to rebuilding its economy.

## Starting Right

The new student company faced a serious initial problem: How do 20 teenagers work cohesively on an enterprise?

These young people consistently followed what they learned in their Junior Achievement sessions. They developed a company structure, business plan and vision for success that put business goals ahead of personal ones. Each founding “owner” presented CVs to the others. The group then selected a company president, managers and directors entirely based on qualifications. The process was repeated for hiring “employees” from among their classmates: Apply, provide a CV and have an interview with the company.

## Planning for Success

Junior Achievement (JA) programs served 4,700 Serbian students in the 2009/2010 school year. Each student learned business and financial planning principles, just as these Kraljevo teenagers did. Their planning analysis showed that lower prices, equal quality and consumers’ enthusiasm to support young people would make them competitive with professional mosaic designers. They also knew they could make a small profit on each frame, possibly more if area ceramic producers would support them by giving them scrap materials.

Armed with a good business model and the strong energy radiating from young people with an adult mission, the Forestry students secured sponsorship from several ceramic companies.



“Student company Entazis, like all JA student companies, was a winner in every way. The kids learned teamwork, hard work and smart work. They no longer just hung out at the cafes after school; they went into the workshop to create new designs, build frames and to make management decisions. And their attitudes, enthusiasm and energy completely changed. The owners and the employees benefited from the experience. They are not young people who will wait for the National Employment Service to call them; they are going to make their own way – successfully.”

Tatjana Vljaković  
JA Teacher  
Forestry School

With access to free materials, students built the first 20 mirror frames and entered the Central Serbian market of Kraljevo.

## Reinvesting Profits

From plan to market entry took just one month for Entazis. The company’s mosaic designs went on sale at a March 8th exhibition supported by Kraljevo Municipality. A good marketing/PR campaign with coverage from local media helped them to sell 16 of the 20 frames they had made.

Immediately, company managers reinvested the profit they made into specialty ceramic tiles to expand their product line to company logos, furniture and pictures.

## Competing at the National Level

Entazis was one of 22 companies selected to compete in Junior Achievement Serbia’s National Student Company Trade Fair, May 25. There, the best student companies exhibited products and competed for prizes. Entazis worked hard and had a very successful day. They brought their creative designs, professionally presented them and netted one-day sales of nearly 10,000 dinar.

## Investing in People and Community

Junior Achievement champions corporate social responsibility and its student companies actively support their schools and community. Entazis created and donated a mosaic to the Children’s Health Center “Studenica.”

USAID is providing ongoing support to Junior Achievement Serbia (JAS) as it becomes a nationwide entrepreneurship program for Serbian youth. The program doubled in size from 2009 to 2010 and now reaches 4,750 students in 163 high school/technical schools, as well as some middle schools.



If you are interested in buying some of wonderful products made by the Kraljevo Forestry School students, please contact the school’s JA coordinator Tatjana Vljaković at:  
+381 64 15 28 501 or +381 36 352 800.

# One Man's Quest for Healthy Food... Walnut Butter from Vojvodina: Best Organic Shelf Product in Great Britain

In the small village of Hadjukovo, near Subotica, Ivan Percic's health food company Suncokret (Sunflower) is quietly churning out award winning organic products. Back in 1976, Ivan had opted for a vegetarian diet, which he later transitioned into a full-on macrobiotic nutritional regime. Unfortunately, a distinct lack of pure, organic oils on the domestic market restricted his options. Knowing that others like him also had little in the way of dietary choices, Ivan decided to build a business based on the premise of healthy eating.

"In 1989, realizing that cold pressed oils, a key ingredient to a healthy diet, could not be found on the home market, I decided to found my own company to produce cold pressed oils. We purchased a hundred-year-old press and began pumpkin, sunflower and dark sesame oil production in a traditional way, thus preserving all the seed's nutrients," recalls Mr. Percic.

After a few years, the company expanded production to over twenty different kinds of edible, medicinal and cosmetic oils. As the business evolved, Suncokret started producing butters and seed bars, and today they boast over 50 products, while still honouring their motto, "Quality comes first."

As awareness of environmental protection and the benefits of an organic diet grew, demand for organic products also increased, especially in Western Europe. Realizing the potential of this market and confident that his high-quality products could stand up to the strongest competition, Ivan focused on exports. Despite his determination, it was not an easy plan to carry out. At the time, Serbia did not have a law on organic product certification, which significantly hampered exports of organic foods.

However, Suncokret managed to get certificates of origin and quality for its products and Ivan began researching foreign markets in order to identify opportunities and find buyers. Understanding the importance of the right presentation and public image, he focused on improving the visual identity of his company and products. Together with USAID Agribusiness marketing experts, he revamped his marketing materials (catalogues, brochures, a presentational DVD...) and changed the packaging and labelling of his products—making them more visually appealing for foreign customers.

In addition, through a series of specialized USAID trainings, Percic learned how to better market and promote his products at international fairs, how to more effectively engage cli-



Ivan Percic

ents and, most importantly, how to close deals.

## Ivan and his products take on the world

In addition to regional fairs, USAID assisted Suncokret to exhibit at the largest European or-



Ivan's Walnut Butter is a hit in the UK.

ganic trade fair "BioFach" in Germany and the "Fancy Food" fair in New York. Armed with the knowledge he had picked up, he decided on his own to exhibit at the "Slow Food" fair in Turin and the "Organic and Natural Food" fair in London.

Suncokret's preparations for these fairs helped turn their years of hard work and dedication into concrete results. Suncokret products can now be found on supermarket shelves in Great Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, Hungary and Croatia.

In a competition of more than 50 products sold in the UK, Britain's "Soil Association Organic Foods" awarded Suncokret's Walnut Butter "The best organic shelf product" title in the 'Store Cupboard Staples' category. Ivan believes that this prestigious award he recently received in London represents a recognition of his work in organic food production and a final acknowledgment of his commitment to high quality products. Comments from the competition's judges included: "Good-quality, fresh nuts"; "Simplicity in a bottle"; and, "Finger-licking good".

USAID's Agribusiness Project will continue to assist Ivan in his future efforts. Currently, with USAID's financial support, he is finalizing Suncokret's new internet site. In keeping with modern times and aiming to make his products available to customers worldwide, Ivan is introducing an online shop. The company has, thus far, been able to maintain its independence from large domestic retail chains which have a tendency to bargain down small producers to untenable profit margins.

Asked the secret of his success, the owner of Suncokret answers simply, "Do what you love! In that case, you will never run out of the ideas or motivation, and success is bound to come. By creating a range of high quality products our aim is to provide the consumer with the option of choosing a healthier diet. It is our hope to help people in our immediate and extended community to improve the quality of their life and their health." Despite the prejudice that "healthy" means expensive food, Ivan is quick to remind people that, "It is even more expensive to be sick."

**You can purchase healthy, tasty and certified organic Suncokret products in Europe online at [www.sunandseed.com](http://www.sunandseed.com) and from September in the U.S. at [www.sainvie.com](http://www.sainvie.com)**

# Subotica Leads the Way in Converting Military Property

## Government Announces Speedier Conversions

The Government of Serbia will soon introduce a simplified and speedier procedure for selling surplus military property, and it will grant extended deadlines to local governments to pay for purchased assets, said Colonel Aleksandar Ilic, Head of the Conversion Master Plan Sub Department in the Ministry of Defense, while speaking at a recent media briefing about converting surplus military property for local development projects.

There are currently 450 surplus military facilities in Serbia, with a total value of between one and four billion Euros. So far, 22 military facilities have been sold in exchange for just under 600 million dinars (approximately \$7.3m) and 24 housing apartments acquired in exchange. Such sales help the military to self-fund its modernization and turns liabilities for the state into assets for local communities.

As Serbia's military converts to a smaller, more mobile and modern force, it is realizing that it holds more property than it needs. All around Serbia, the military is spending money to maintain bases that no longer have any strategic purpose. At the same time, municipalities keen on attracting investment are eyeing these bases as potential sites for brownfield investments.

The national Defense System Reform Strategy passed in 2004 recognized this issue and defined the legal framework which would allow for the auctioning off of surplus military property. At the time, the military also drew up a list of 450 properties that it no longer needed. According to this document, local governments were given preemptive rights. The Master Plan adopted in June 2006 established the procedure for the conversion of property for commercial purposes and how the military can utilize the resources it receives as compensation.

## Subotica: A pioneer in cutting red tape

Subotica has been interested in acquiring the military barracks "Petar Drapšin" and the training camp "Gornji Radanovci" (145 ha, 178 million dinars) since November 2005 when the Serbian Government asked for expressions of interest. It took a few years, but with technical assistance from USAID's Municipal Economic Growth Activity and the good will of the Serbian military, Subotica managed to finally cut through the red tape and navigate through a forest of obsolete procedures. In February 2010, the municipality signed a contract with the Ministry of Defense. Now it is in the process of taking over this land and preparing it for potential investors.

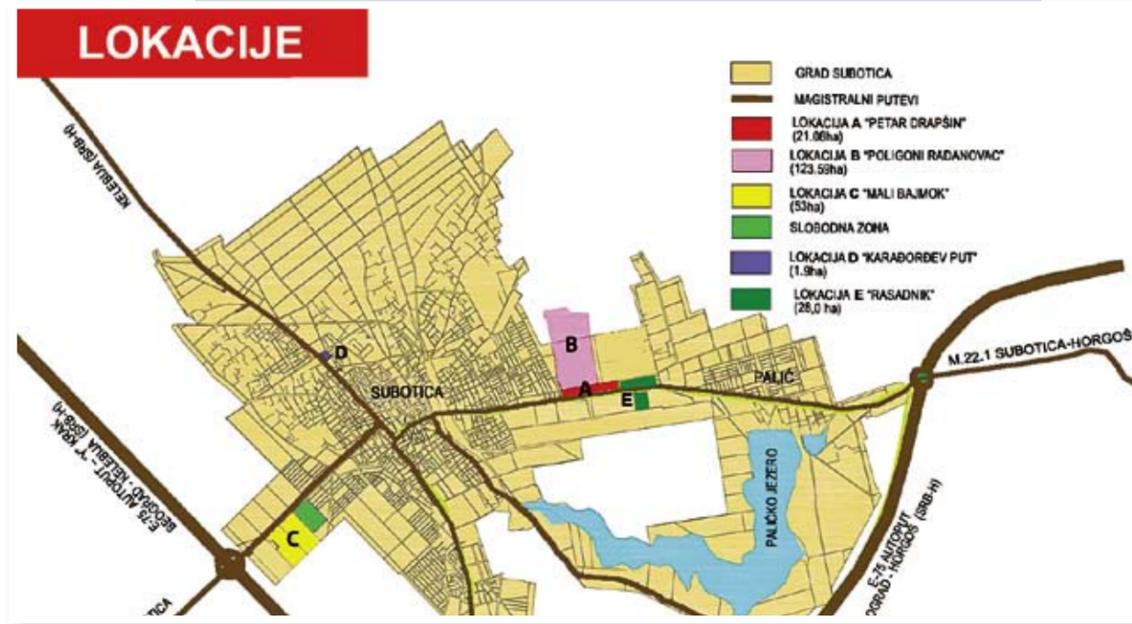
USAID has been assisting municipalities by working with the Ministry of Defense, the National Property Directorate and the Ministry of Finance's Tax Administration Division to accelerate the conversion process by defining deadlines in the administrative procedures and by creating a

methodology for the assessment of military properties. USAID has also helped municipalities in preparing the documents necessary to apply for loans and by mediating between local governments and military authorities and trying to find negotiated solutions that are beneficial for both parties. All sides have expressed satisfaction that a new, efficient and more flexible manner of communication has opened up between the state and local governments.

Subotica is using the large plot of land it acquired to establish an Industrial-Technology Park. Deputy Mayor Mr. Dušan Guslov expressed his appreciation for USAID-organized study tours to similar industrial parks in Hungary and the Czech Republic. "We had the opportunity to see how large industrial zones are managed and how to attract major investors." USAID advisors also helped Subotica by specifying which marketing techniques and content would be most effective

in promoting the location to foreign investors. They also introduced them to European business standards to apply when planning how to best utilize resources and set up infrastructure, while also identifying the kinds of basic technical assistance the city would be expected to provide.

Subotica is now going through the process of relocating the existing business incubator USAID helped establish to the new Industrial - Technology Park. "This will," Mr. Guslov adds, "reduce current lease costs, so that funds can be directed to supporting the development of small enterprises." If other municipalities follow Subotica's example and convert surplus military objects to commercial use, this could lead to opening of hundreds of new businesses and the creation of thousands of new jobs throughout Serbia - at the same time providing the military with the funds it needs to become more efficient and modern.



OPLANETI SEI RECIKLIRAJ



“Get with the Planet! Recycle.”

One of the most popular activities during the “Get with the Planet! Recycle” campaign was the use of recycling androids (containers based loosely around the famous robot from Star Wars - R2D2 that attracted lots of children. Hundreds of children fed the robots with many different types of waste (plastic bottles, cans and old magazines), after which the robots thanked the children and told them how the waste they deposited would be reused.

## Serbia Plugs into Renewable Energy

USAID’s Agribusiness project is assisting Serbian agricultural companies to find out which renewable energy sources make sense for them and how to save money or even profit from their use. Renewable energy has the potential to benefit the natural environment as well as the Serbian economy. Utilization of agricultural and wood waste biomass can help Serbia meet its energy needs in a more environmental-friendly manner, while also helping to transfer technology and create jobs in local, mostly rural communities.



konferencija Agrobiznis i obnovljivi izvori energije. Potencijali i prepreke. Beograd, 29. jun 2010.

## Study Tour for Hospice, Palliative Care and Patient Support

The Community Connections Program offers training opportunities in the United States for professionals who demonstrate aptitude and leadership potential in different fields. Ten professionals from Serbia will have the opportunity to meet with their U.S. counterparts and learn about the organization and operation of the US health system in the area of hospice, palliative care, and patient support. They will experience a multi-disciplinary approach and how that affects the patients and their families and their ability to have a better quality of life. They will explore support services for patients and their families within the U.S. health system, including the role of civil society and volunteers. Participants will learn about the importance of doctor/patient communication, communication with the patient by other medical professionals, of involving patients in the decision-making regarding their treatment, and psycho-social and religious/spiritual support. All expenses in the U.S., including international airfare, insurance, professional and cultural programs and room and board will be provided by World Learning (passport fees and travel within Serbia are not included).



Participants on a previous Community Connections study tour.

### RECRUITMENT

World Learning will be recruiting for professionals in the field of Hospice, Palliative Care and Patient Support from Serbia beginning on... (deadlines and other relevant dates for applicants were provided in the Serbian version) The dates of the program in the U.S. are planned for late October to mid November, 2010.

### Who can apply?

In order to be eligible for the Community Connections Program, applicants must be a medical or non medical professionals working in palliative and/or hospice care for chronically or terminally ill patients. For more information or to get an application please visit the website: [www.worldlearning.org.rs](http://www.worldlearning.org.rs) or call +381 3612-462.

## Five New "Business Friendly" Municipalities

The National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED), with USAID support, designated five additional Serbian municipalities/cities as business friendly. Bujanovac, Leskovac, Pirot, Subotica and Vranje all met the nearly 100 different criteria necessary for the creation of a business friendly environment and were bestowed with the prestigious designation of being “Business Friendly” Municipalities at a ceremony held in the National Assembly Hall in Belgrade. This designation will help these municipalities to attract new investors – as potential investors use this designation as a barometer to determine where to invest. Loznica, Kragujevac and Indjija were the first municipalities to receive this designation back in September 2008 and have all seen significant investments since.

U.S. Ambassador Mary Warlick noted that “The five municipalities being honored today have proven that they understand the needs of business and have learned to look at their municipalities from an investor’s point of view.”



Mayors show off their Business Friendly certificates.

# Knowledge is Power in Attracting Tourists

In 2008, the Government’s Statistical Yearbook reported that 34 per cent of all domestic and foreign tourist arrivals were concentrated in just Belgrade and Novi Sad. For foreign visitors, the concentration was nearly double with 412,000 (64 per cent) of arrivals concentrated in these cities.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC) estimated that overall revenues attributable to tourism brought 232 billion RSD into Serbia and provided 128,000 jobs in 2009, representing 7.4% of GDP and 6.7% of all jobs. By 2020, the WTTTC estimates the total impact of tourism could triple to 631 billion RSD and create over 30,000 additional jobs. In order to realize this potential, the government (both national and local) and the tourism industry need to be proactive in their planning, development and marketing.

“It is difficult, if not almost impossible to develop and market tourism in the most cost-effective way without research, especially visitor surveys,” according to USAID’s tourism consultant Scott Wayne who held strategic planning sessions for USAID partner municipalities earlier this year. The USAID Municipal Economic Growth Activity, in coordination with the National Tourism Organization (NTO), launched online surveys in pilot municipalities (Zajecar, Pecinci, Novi Sad and Sombor) and held workshops on market research and surveys in order to better target and plan tourism development. Over the past two months, USAID and the National Tourism Organization also conducted a national survey of municipal tourism offices to assess their needs and capacity.

### The best way to know what visitors want is to ask them

USAID and the National Tourism Office (NTO) will soon be launching national and international visitor surveys through the NTO and selected municipalities across the country in order to increase the capacity for tourism market research in Serbia. Results will be published by early September, when marketing plans for 2011 need to



Some tourists are looking for history...



...while others just want unspoiled nature.

start taking shape. NTO plans to expand this initiative with other local tourism offices in Serbia – 110 of them, to be precise. With better knowledge of where guests are from and what kinds of tourism offerings they are looking for, municipalities can better meet the expectations of existing tourists and better attract future visitors.

USAID has supported tourism development in Novi Sad, Sombor, Pecinci and Zajecar through

280,000 dollars in grants. USAID supported Novi Sad’s “Revival of Danube Banks” project, including construction of a Tourist Information Center on the Danube bank and tourism signage in the city; Sombor’s “Ethno Houses Reconstruction, Old Crafts and Organic Food Production” projects; and in Pecinci the “Revival of Obedska Bara”, including construction of a visitors’ tower in Obedska Bara.

# Serbia Scouted for all the Right Reasons

This spring, waiters in some of Belgrade's famous restaurants discovered they had Hollywood stars like Gerard Butler and Vanessa Redgrave asking them to recommend Serbian wines, dog walkers noticed film crews occupying abandoned buildings at all hours of the day and night and, most importantly, drivers, costume makers, lighting specialists and hundreds of others all found themselves working with their counterparts from all around the world. This particular group was filming Ralph Fiennes' *Coriolanus*.

The best part of the story above is that thanks to the Serbia Film Commission (SFC), which was established last year with USAID assistance to promote Serbia as a film location, such foreign productions may soon become commonplace. During the last nine months, international producers have visited Serbia and are considering projects that have a potential total value of \$360 million. While many of these projects are still pending, the SFC has supported efforts to secure an additional \$100 million in international projects expected to be filmed in the country in the next two years.

## How did this all come about?

The first step in the process was, of course, letting the world know that Serbia is a wonderful and unique country with professional movie makers capable of providing everything that is needed to make a top level production. The Commission has done this by attending industry shows and building an internet presence [filminserbia.com](http://filminserbia.com), and now many of the location scouts coming to Serbia are just following in the footsteps of their colleagues who have been here and liked what they found.

Before stepping foot in Serbia, international producers ask their local contacts to identify sites that most closely resemble the locations they need – this can be anything from the Ottoman, Roman or Austro-Hungarian empires to modern and futuristic cities for sci-fi features, or even just rural communities. Fortunately, Serbia has and can represent all of these locations. Local production service companies prepare presentations with available locations and if it looks like a fit, then the producer will schedule a location scout visit, often with directors or locations managers.

Scouting trips are very intensive as visiting teams often want to see all of the proposed locations within a just a few days. Local companies need to make all the preparations that enable a smooth scouting mission. Easy accessibility to all of the locations is key to demonstrating that the government authorities are welcoming to foreign productions. Producers and directors usually request to see the hotels, office space, studios, technical equipment and catering services to ensure that they meet required standards. Directors and producers also like to get a "feeling" of the place where their cast and crew would have to spend weeks or even months.



Novi Beograd became the 13th District of Paris in a Luc Besson production.

## Great impressions

Serbia usually exceeds expectations, and the visitors go back amazed that the country has such a variety of locations and architectural styles and, that it is well organized to support film production.

The overall impressions when projects "wrap" are extremely positive across the board—that Serbia is a very hospitable country with amazing places to go out, delicious food and kind, professional people. Even Hollywood stars, with high demands and expectations, find themselves enjoying themselves precisely because of the talented and hospitable people they work with during their stay. They also value the security and privacy they experience on and off set, and that Serbians show good taste and discretion in hosting these actors. Furthermore, inter-

national producers inevitably comment on the hard working and "can do" attitudes they find from their whole crews.

Several Serbian film professionals internationally recognized as industry leaders in their specific fields, have this to say about international productions in Serbia:

**Bojana Nikitovic**, costume designer, commented that international crews notice that our teams consist of professionals who work hard, know foreign languages and always give their best. Foreign crews notice that quickly and it makes the whole process of filming much more relaxed. They all enjoy Belgrade, its famous cafés and bars and especially the beautiful girls". Bojana works with an excellent team of dressers and tailors, who were told by some cast mem-

bers from "*Coriolanus*" that they were among the best they had ever worked with.

**Lidija Kurucki**, owner of CineLabs (the film lab that processed negatives for *Coriolanus*), agrees with this and also points out that foreigners expect high-quality service in a professional and timely manner. They have an understanding for the process that Serbian film industry is going through at the moment and are glad to be a part of its further development, but the service has to be impeccable. It gives us great pleasure to be able to meet their expectations."

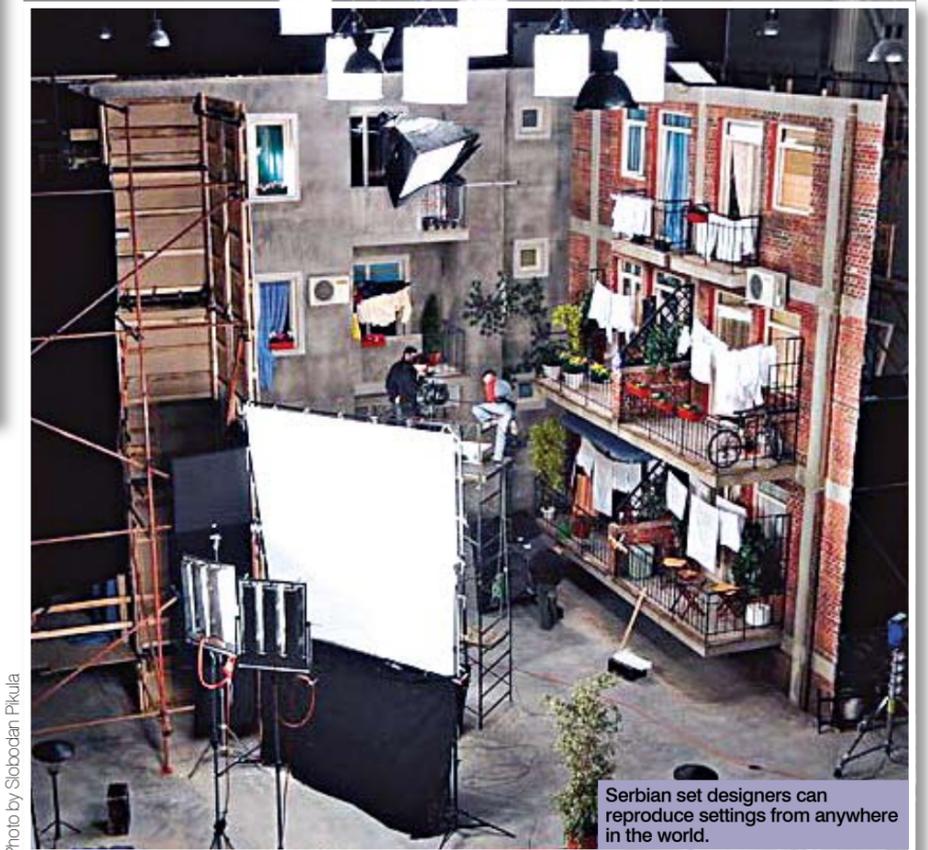
**latko Volarevic**, production manager: "When they first arrive they are a bit skeptical but soon realize that our services and equipment are sometimes even better than in other countries in the region. Our crews are exceptionally knowledgeable about the technical aspects of production and the materials used for props and costumes. Of course, they are also very pleased with what Serbia and Belgrade have to offer when they get a break in the work schedule."

**Ana Ilic**, Executive Director of the Serbia Film Commission noted that, "The next step is to

make Serbia a regional leader in film production. What is most important now is that we have such significant interest for Serbia to develop a film incentive program like those in close to 30 other countries. This would make Serbia truly competitive."

Serbia also still needs to work on becoming "film friendly". That is something that local locations managers and production companies are struggling with regardless of whether the project is local or international." This means the development of standard and precise procedures for obtaining filming permits and access to locations, as well as prices for those services. "Accessibility to the locations is still a problem", Ilic says, "...although some government institutions have offered exceptional support for the filmmakers, including the Parliament, Ministry of Interior and Defense, etc."

Meanwhile, the SFC has grown to more than 50 members – institutions, companies and freelance filmmakers and is supporting Serbian film production services firms to promote Serbia internationally. The Commission continues to place the highest priority on getting an incentives package into place and developing a film friendly environment that will enable the industry to grow to \$200-\$300 million in annual revenues.



Serbian set designers can reproduce settings from anywhere in the world.

## Students in the Assembly



The National Assembly of Serbia



Intern Sandra Mitic

Getting experience is important, but not easy, for young people in any line of work. As any young job applicant knows, experience counts. If your goal is to work in the service of your fellow citizens, there is no higher institution in Serbia to get this experience than in the National Assembly.

To help facilitate such an experience, USAID's implementer, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) worked with the Human Resources department of the National Assembly to set up a new Assembly Internship Program.

In May, the President of the National Assembly, Slavica Djukic Dejanovic and USAID Mission Director Michael Harvey officially opened a nine month internship program, which is focused on providing the Assembly with much needed assistance, while providing quality work experience for talented and committed young people from all over Serbia.

In a clear indication of the interest in such an experience, over 300 students applied for the 24 available internships. With so many applicants, tough decisions had to be made and the best applicants were selected. This year, women led the charge and 16 of the 24 chosen were women. These interns are now working with Assembly Members in the Committees on Foreign Affairs, European Integration, Social Affairs, Inter-Ethnic Cooperation, and Legislation; the Library and Research Office, the Secretary General's Office, and the Financial and Information Technology (IT) departments and the DS, SPS, DSS, PUPS, and Roma Caucuses.

While a majority of the interns are in their final years of study in the Faculties of Law or Political Science, several come from the faculties of Philology, Agriculture, and Economics at the Universities of Belgrade and Novi Sad. The highest rated interns will be invited to take the national civil service exam which could lead to a public service career.

Mission Director Harvey emphasized the central role that Parliament plays in a demo-

cratic society and that the key to its success lies in the recruitment of the brightest young people in Serbia to work in the National Assembly. Harvey told students that, "In the United States, interns play a vital role in making sure that representatives are informed on a daily basis about the issues that concern the people. You too can play that role." Clearly, they are taking on that role with enthusiasm:

**Viktorija Ogrizovic**, a student of Philology, is an accomplished linguist as well as a musician, painter, kick-boxer and winner of the Ivo Andric award for creative writing. She is now working in the Democratic Party caucus and says, "I appreciate this opportunity to work with accomplished professionals in the Assembly and to play a part in the further development of the National Assembly as the voice of the people."

**Strahinja Mavrenski**, a student of Law, who has been assigned to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, is excited to move beyond the theory he learned in the classroom to see how government actually works. "It is gratifying to be able to give of yourself for the benefit of your family, friends, fellow citizens and your country. I am honored to be able to participate in this internship program and I have a feeling of great responsibility because our work in Parliament will have an impact on the future of Serbia."

**Sandra Mitic**, a political science student, was assigned to the European Integration committee and is most interested in helping Serbia make progress toward European Accession. "I participated in a student exchange program in Lyon, France and it taught me that sharing ideas and opinions can lead to creative solutions to complex problems. I look forward to working with NDI, our mentors and my colleagues so that we may contribute to the strengthening of democracy in Serbia."

# Building a Greener Serbia

The worldwide trend to "Go green!" is not just because it is the right thing to do for the planet, but because it also makes sense for our wallets. We've seen gas guzzling cars consigned to history—as fuel prices have skyrocketed. And, we're now seeing buildings being designed and built to be more efficient and environmentally friendly; using green building materials, consuming less energy, less water and polluting less.

**Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED)** is an internationally recognized certification system that has set the standards for green building. As more and more companies, governments and individuals want to meet green building standards, USAID's Competitiveness Project is working with the Association of Consulting Engineers of Serbia (ACES) and Colliers International to establish Serbia as a regional leader, with companies and engineers capable of bidding for and winning green building projects, by implementing the first LEED® Green Associate Course in Serbia.

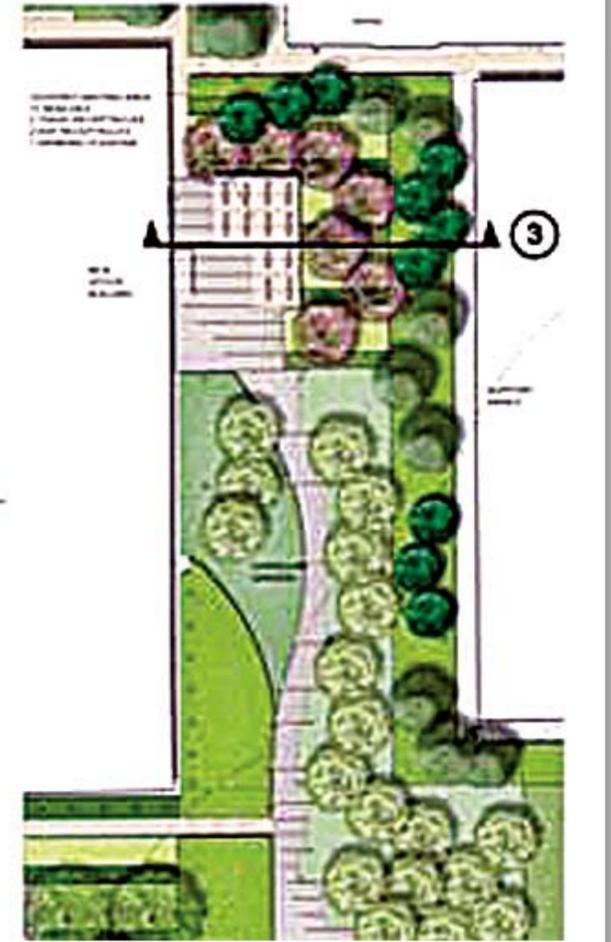
USAID is providing a 50% scholarship for students and professionals in the course, which concentrates on the benefits of Green Building standards, LEED certification processes and LEED core concepts. The first course for 100 professionals and students wrapped up



The new U.S. Embassy compound will be the first completely LEED certified building in Serbia.



in December 2009. The second round has just begun.



USAID also supported Supernatural NGO in production of an Eco Pavilion, constructed completely from recyclable materials, which had its premiere at the Supernatural Festival and later at a press event in Belgrade's Kalemegdan Fortress. Supernatural, Colliers and USAID's Competitiveness Project are working together to promote Green Architecture, sustainable materials, and Green Building concepts.



Supernatural's Green Pavilion at Kalemegdan

## "Dosta čekanja!" (Enough Waiting!)

Over the past year, the Ministry of Justice's Law Drafting Committee, with technical assistance provided by USAID, has proposed significant reforms to the current enforcement law, including the introduction of a system of professional enforcement. The draft law being presented for consideration comes as the result of the work and research of more than 35 experts from the fields of law, business and banking and incorporates European best practices to provide concrete solutions to systematic enforcement problems.

Successful cooperation on the enforcement system reform demonstrates the mutual commitment to developing modern laws and regulations in Serbia which are consistent with both international and EU standards and are necessary to build the foundation for economic growth and increased prosperity. Over the past several years, the United States, through USAID, has been working hand-in-hand with the Serbian Government to create a more conducive investment climate. This poster was part of an awareness raising campaign on the importance of enforcement.

# Our Differences Can Make a Difference

Milutin is 30-years-old and holds a Master's degree in Organizational Sciences. At first glance he seems like many of his peers. He is young, friendly, handsome and highly-educated. However, there is something that 'differentiates' him from his peers. Milutin is living with a difficult and rare congenital disease. Most of his friends or relatives do not even know about his disease, as he, like many other persons with disabilities feels uncomfortable disclosing his 'difference' for fear of being rejected and marginalized.

Despite all the difficulties and prejudices he had to overcome in a decade of hunting in vain for a job, Milutin is now happily employed at a cultural institution in Belgrade. "Before, employers just wouldn't get back to me, as soon as they found out about my disability. Now things are changing, thanks to the new Law for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities and activities carried out as part of the MIDWAY project," said Milutin.

The "Midway Initiative - for inclusion of children with disabilities into the educational system and employment of persons with disabilities" is being implemented by Catholic Relief Services in partnership with the Center for Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities and the Center for Interactive education, with USAID's financial support. Thanks to the project's lobbying with employers, organizing of employment fairs for persons with disabilities and other activities to promote inclusion, 69 persons with disabilities have found employment in the last 18 months.

Still, this is just a start. The number of persons with disabilities who can rely on steady employment remains negligible. The sheer number of people who are still seeking the parity and equal

opportunities outlined in so many strategies and proclamations over the years is especially worrisome. It is this employment, combined with access to education, which helps create preconditions necessary for people with disabilities to live independent lives. It is also their main weapon in their struggle for self-determination and self-respect.

Nenad Ciric, twenty-seven, from Novi Sad is another extraordinary, young man. A lawyer by vocation, and a person with a disability, he shared his story with us: "I am from Sremska Mitrovica and began my law studies in Novi Sad in 1999. Soon after, I became a member of the association for students with disabilities. My journey from being a student to being a fighter for human rights began then. I became active in the movement of persons with disabilities.

When the Center for Independent living of persons with disabilities initiated the MIDWAY project, they offered me a position. Since February 2009, I have been engaged in fighting for the employment rights of persons with disabilities. This project represents my first noteworthy engagement.

I am now recognized in the local community. I became known as the one who pushes the issue of employment of persons with disabilities. Through great efforts, but quite successfully, the MIDWAY project has managed to put employment (for person with disabilities) at the front of everyone's agendas, while I personally embody the idea that the time has come for persons with disabilities to be employed. And despite some signs of a lack of motivation on the side of employers, things are slowly moving in the right direction - thanks to a lot of good will.

By the nature of my position I was in frequent contact with institutions working in the realm of labor and employment. During an informal conversation with one of my contacts, the logical question popped up: "Are YOU working somewhere? What are your ambitions?" etc. This is how the idea was hatched for me to be employed, or that I should GET employed. Eventually, I received a job offer from the provincial administration - which I whole-heartedly accepted. My employment is proof of the new law's effectiveness when it is implemented in practice. The fact that more and more persons with disabilities are now finding job opportunities is a sign of the genuine democratization that our society is undergoing," concludes Nenad.

Since May, the law dictates that at least one in 20 employees has to be a person with a disability. Statistics show that there are up to 800,000



## INCLUSION



TO MAKE THE SCHOOL COMPLETE

I TEACH INCLUSION TO MY CHILDREN, NOBODY CAN CHOOSE WHAT THEY WILL BE BORN LIKE, BUT WE CAN ALL CHOOSE WHAT KIND OF PERSON WE WILL BECOME.

Slavica, 47, mother of four

persons with disabilities in Serbia. The vast majority of people with disabilities actively seeking employment are under 45 and 16% have completed junior college or hold bachelor's degrees, a higher percentage than the national average for all unemployed persons.

Those who have the privilege of meeting Milutin and Nenad quickly have any prejudices or stereotypes society places on persons with disabilities completely torn down. More and more people realize that rather than having 'limitations,' people with disabilities bring with them the diversity, can-do spirit and resilience that all employers are looking for. Imagine how boring the world would be with only one song, and then say YES to tolerance and the openness towards our differences!

### Article 3.

Education system has to provide for all children, students and adults:

- 1) Equal right to and availability of education regardless of their sex; social, cultural, ethnic, religious and other affiliations; residence, i.e. home address; material circumstances; health condition; development disorders and disabilities; and other.



Nenad Ciric

# Fire Safety Back in the Classroom for Serbian Students

Recently, at the "Jovan Ducic" school in Belgrade, U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Mary Warlick joined Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of the Interior Ivica Dacic and the Minister of Education Dr. Zarko Obradovic to officially mark the launch of emergency safety training in Serbia's elementary and primary schools.

A new poster was unveiled at the event depicting the proper steps to take in the case of fire. The poster was funded by USAID and created in partnership with the Ministry of Interior's Sector for Emergency Management and the Red Cross as a part of the Government of Serbia's campaign to inform schoolchildren about what to do in the case of fires and other emergencies.

This is the first such campaign since the early 1990s, when education on natural and man-made disasters was curtailed in Serbian schools. This is also the first public activity organized by the newly created National Training Center (NTC) for Emergency Management. The Center was created as part of the new law on emergency management and brings emergency management personnel from five separate ministries together under one roof and under the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior. The training curriculum to be managed through the Center is based

on the technical assistance and training methodology created by USAID's Preparedness Planning Activity to train approximately 1,000 people from 70 municipalities throughout Serbia.

At the event, Deputy Prime Minister Dacic praised the cooperation between the Sector of Emergency Management and USAID's Preparedness and Planning Activity. While speaking to the schoolchildren at the event, Ambassador Warlick encouraged the children by reminding them that, "By listening carefully and knowing what to do, and making sure your friends and family know what to do, you are providing very important help to emergency response heroes. And you know what - that makes you all heroes too."

As part of the event, the school conducted a fire drill and the local fire brigade put on a live action demonstration - showing how trapped students could evacuate from the school building by jumping onto an inflatable emergency airbag.



Jumping with style in a simulated escape exercise.

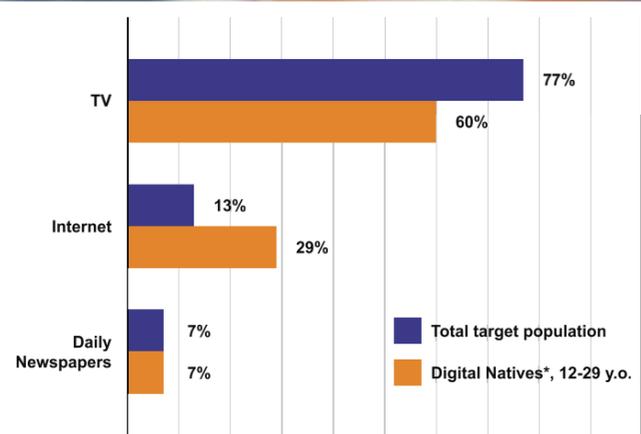


USAID is supporting the Ministry of Interior's Emergency Management Sector to conduct a fire safety campaign in schools.

If you still wonder when Serbia will embrace social media — it already has! Twenty six percent of the Serbian population is active on Facebook, according to survey findings released by USAID and IREX. There are even employers in Serbia who not only allow, but actually encourage their employees to explore possibilities for bringing about business innovations (and the revenue that can generate) through new media — even if that means access to Facebook and chatting during office hours.

It may well be that there has been no innovation in human history that has so immensely transformed our lives, while doing it so quietly. New media and social networks like Facebook, Youtube and Twitter rule the internet today and have redefined the ways we spend our free time and do our jobs.

Recognizing the need for media to

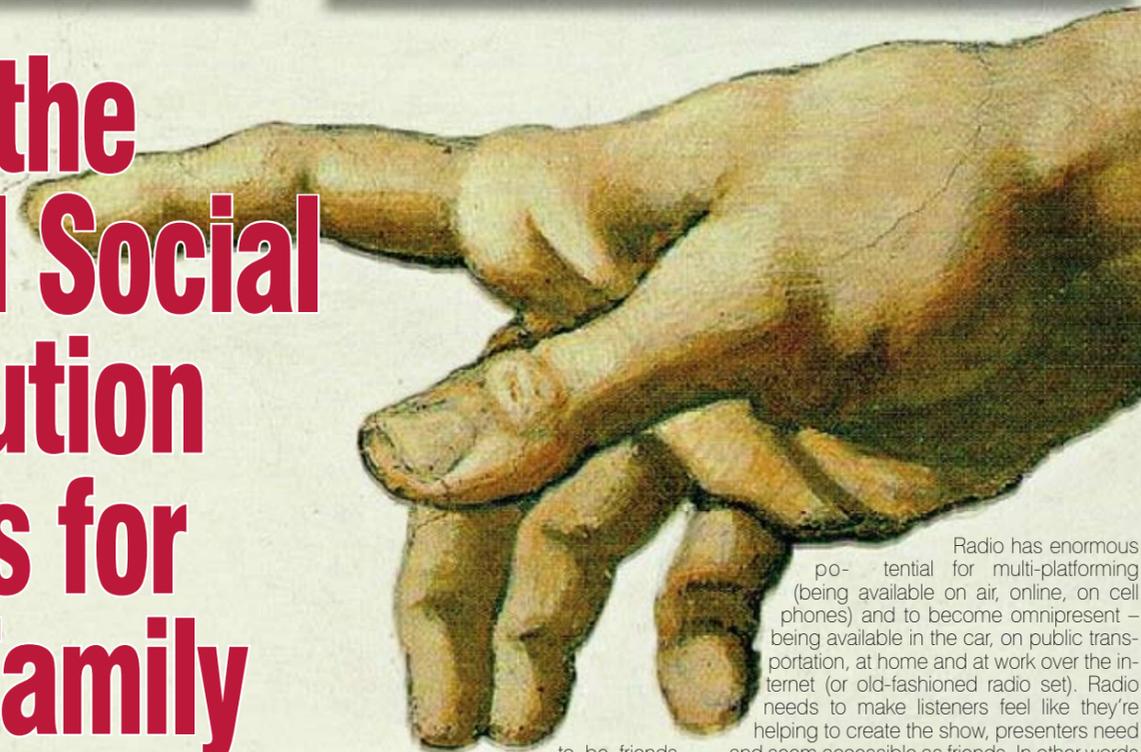


\*Digital Natives is term used in England for young generations who have developed their media habits in a world which was already going digital. In England, 19-24 years old people are regarded as Young Natives; in our survey, all people up to 30 years old belong to this group, since results show that they are more keen to use new media and new technologies



Sharing ideas on social media with international colleagues at Radio Days in Copenhagen.

# What the Global Social Revolution Means for Your Family



Radio has enormous potential for multi-platforming (being available on air, online, on cell phones) and to become omnipresent — being available in the car, on public transportation, at home and at work over the internet (or old-fashioned radio set). Radio needs to make listeners feel like they're helping to create the show, presenters need to be friends and seem accessible as friends. In other words — it's all about building a community around broadcasts and stretching the impact of radio shows beyond the hours they are broadcasted.

Faced with shrinking advertising budgets and the struggle to survive, radio stations in Serbia needed a change of perspective. Together with participants from 35 countries, representatives from 11 radio stations from all around Serbia were supported by USAID to attend the first Radiodays Europe Conference in Copenhagen (in March 2010), on the present and future of radio in the digital age. They were exposed to new and unique business models, media trends from around the world, advertising models and how promotional tie-ins can work. It will be exciting to watch and listen to how those new ideas will spin in Serbia.

adjust to this brave new world, USAID, through its Media Assistance implementer IREX, has been helping local and regional radio and television stations to embrace these changes and figure out how to prosper from them.

A survey on youth and media consumption, with new media as a focus, was commissioned by USAID's project in order to provide insight into market trends and help partner radio and TV stations stay on top of them. Only by learning where the people's minds and hearts are — can we meet them there.

Internet has already surpassed printed newspapers as a source of everyday information in Serbia. Following global trends, it seems that we are no longer going to search for news. News will search for us. This shouldn't

come as a surprise as more than 50% of Serbian households are connected to the internet.

On a working day, between 8 and 10 PM, internet traffic reaches its peak when 42% of users are surfing for news, downloading music and other content, social networking, using Instant Messaging (IM) services or reading blogs and forums. When it comes to radio and internet — the survey showed that 33% of internet users listened to radio stations online (live or podcasts). Radio as a medium is preferred over playlists because of new releases, its ability to surprise and a sense of companionship. And when you are listening to the radio, online or on air, you can still surf the web, chat with friends and do all the other multi-tasking that modern life seems to require.

are lying ahead for broadcasters and viewers. Switching over from analog to digital TV and radio broadcasting will open possibilities for starting new programs, but also new mobile and wireless services. As we are getting used to already available HD channels, there's a growing curiosity about 3D television.

Through its Media Activity, USAID partnered with the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society, to produce an Economic Study on what the impact of conversion to Digital TV would mean for Serbia and to create a media plan to promote Digital Conversion for Serbian TV and to better inform citizens of the preconditions and opportunities for digital TV in the next two years, both necessary for successful completion of the multiphase digitization process.

Representatives of the Ministry, state agencies, media associations and broadcast professionals engaged on drafting Law on Electronic Media, took part in two study tours to United Kingdom, where digitization is in progress and where viewers were able to watch the 2010 World Cup in 3D, using the same DVB-T2 standard that has been adopted in Serbia. Participants from Serbia met with British counterparts from the Regulatory Agency (OFCOM), the BBC and other agencies responsible for the switch to digital. Through the visit, USAID helped the Serbian representatives to get insight into what they'll need to do in order to have a successful switchover. Serbian representatives hope that, come the next Olympics, you'll be able to watch them in 3D as well as in High Definition!

## Blogging for better care for Mothers and Babies

Twenty one months ago, Serbian blogger Branka Stamenkovic (a.k.a. Krugolina Borup) published a series of blog posts on B92's website (Serbia's most read news website) describing her own experiences at a maternity hospital. Her poignant reflections about the quality of care she received, as well as her vivid accounts of the conditions and procedures in hospitals resonated deeply with thousands of other women who shared her sentiments. The blog quickly became popular. Women from around Serbia shared their own impassioned testimonials and sympathy with each other about the conditions within maternity wards and hospitals.

Soon after realizing the uproar that she had created on B92's website through her blog, Branka started *Mother Courage*, a civic initiative intended to effect change in maternity hospitals, and registered a website under the same name. The idea behind the website was to encourage more women and expectant mothers to share their experiences with others. On the website, her own story was entered as *Mama-Kangaroo 001*, a comical moniker used to depict women in the late stage of pregnancy. Hundreds of personal stories and photos have been sent in so far. Each woman's story is anonymous and posted as *Mama-Kangaroo*. Currently, there are 643 accounts personal accounts of stays at maternity hospitals and on-line discussions take place daily. Some posts are positive, many are negative, but the important part is that they inspire debate on the issues and identify areas for the Ministry of Health to address.

Recently, a Facebook group called "We Are Changing Serbia Together – Maternity Hospitals," which already has 726 members, was launched to further complement the advocacy efforts of *Mother Courage*. Based on issues raised by *Mother Courage*, the Ministry of Health has adopted a provision that, in the next three years all maternity hospitals in Serbia must be accredited as having a "baby-friendly" environment and that all childbearing women have a set of basic maternity rights, such as the right to choose which hospital they go to.

Today, *Mother Courage* is a registered civil society organization (CSO) that has received huge public support, widespread media attention and four

special awards for its initiative to spearhead change and improve conditions in maternity hospitals. Moreover, it is a fantastic example of how social media and new technologies are being used by civil society organizations to effectively mobilize people to advocate for changes at the local and national level.

*Mother Courage* is a grantee of USAID's Civil Society Advocacy Initiative project. The project is supporting *Mother Courage* to work with the Ministry of Health to develop a more accountable, patient-oriented, international standard, health care system. They are filming a documentary featuring testimonials from expectant mothers and representatives from relevant state institutions, which will be presented at public discussion panels that will be organized in ten municipalities which have maternity hospitals.

### A sample of comments on the website:

• Thank you for the courage and perseverance to get this entire issue started and I sincerely hope that something good will come out of it all for us and our children. When I think of the birth of my daughter, my first emotions are not joy and excitement, but joy mixed with much more dominant feeling of shame, pain, fear...

Funny, I thought all that would pass after a while, but it didn't... Then I thought I was being too sensitive, even spoiled, but still I know I can endure a lot. (Mama Kangaroo - 177)

• I was admitted by the extremely tall and hefty midwife who was on duty. She was rough with me from the beginning: "You couldn't have picked a worse time to deliver a baby! Come on, get in!" She slammed the door in front of my husband's face. (MK - 282)

• Seven years ago, DR. Aleksandar L. delivered my baby and in spite of the long and hard labor, I didn't have a single complaint about the hospital staff who were supportive all the way through my labor. (MK - 155)

• The heating system doesn't work in the winter, the bathrooms are in ruins, and the rooms are furnished with iron beds covered with torn bed spreads and pillow cases...but, all of this becomes less important when one meets very kind and skilful staff. (MK - 283)



### Evolution of a Little Box



A bit more than half a century ago, on August 23rd, 1958, TV Belgrade started broadcasting. 80 TV sets were placed in various public spaces in Belgrade, and an additional 36 went into the apartments of high officials. Central news was broadcast at 8 PM, lasting 15 minutes.

Today, with 3,498,155 TV sets in Serbia (97% of households own at least one TV set), exciting times



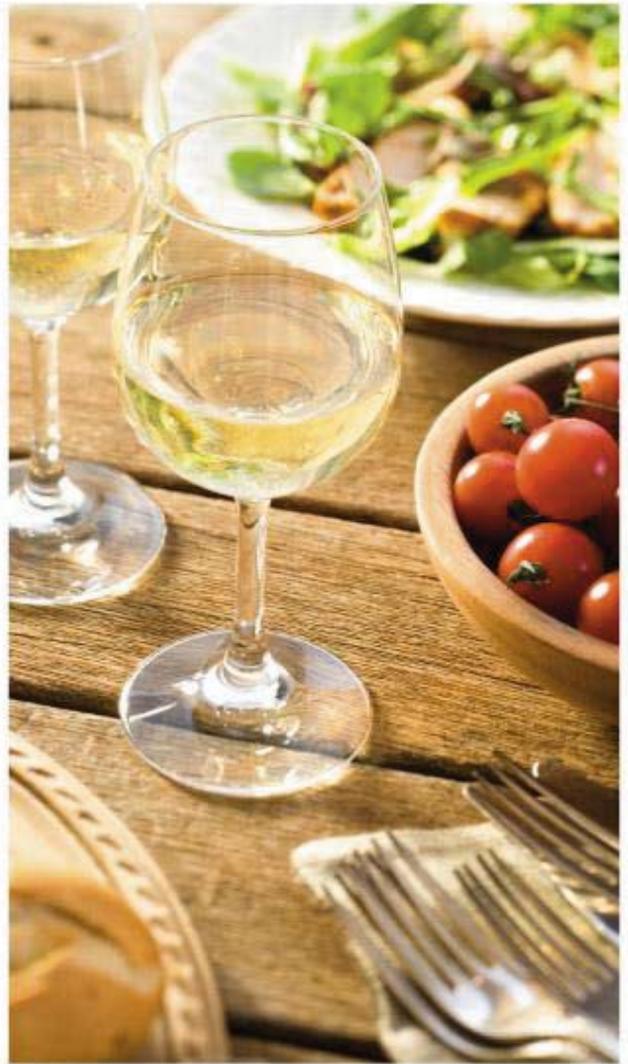
## PREMIER INTERNATIONAL FINE FOOD SHOW IN BELGRADE

The definitive regional event for all regional producers to showcase their fine food and drink to key trade buyers from Europe and beyond

- Milk and dairy
- Meat and deli
- Specialty food
- Fish and seafood
- Bread and bakery
- Confectionery
- Juices, beverages and water
- Beer, wines and spirits
- Coffee and tea
- Organic food
- Regional and ethnic food
- Spices and condiments

**CULINARIA** Fine Food Show  
September 23-25, 2010  
BELEXPOCENTAR, Belgrade

E-mail: [info@belexpo.rs](mailto:info@belexpo.rs); Phone: +381 11 3345 228, 2632 228  
[www.culinaria.rs](http://www.culinaria.rs)



Over the past seven years, USAID has been assisting Serbian companies to increase their exports. Over 200 companies have so far established new contacts with buyers through participation at international fairs in Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, Russia, Japan, U.A.E. and especially the U.S.

Научиће  
да њланираће  
своје финансије.

[www.novcici.rs](http://www.novcici.rs)



### Library Saves Your Money!

The website [www.novcici.rs](http://www.novcici.rs) is dedicated to financial education of the Serbian citizens and was initiated within the "Financial Education of Citizens" program implemented by USAID's Serbia Economic Growth project, in cooperation with the Belgrade City Library. Novčići has received several international awards for its innovative approach to financial education.

